technical support, financial assistance under the Rubber Plantation Development Scheme and required planting materials to those growers who are interested to revive the damaged plantations, irrespective of any compensation and subsidies or assistance already received by them.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. There are two new proposals for raising 40 ha. each under Block Plantation Project during 2000-01 planting season with active involvement of the State Government.

Import of Tea

5197. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the countries from which tea is being imported at present;

(b) the quantum of tea imported during last three years from those countries, year-wise;

(c) whether Government propose to increase the production of tea;

(d) if so, the steps taken in that direction;

(e) the target fixed in that regard for Ninth Plan; and

(f) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Tea is imported into India from nearly 20 countries of the world. The major countries from which tea are imported and the quantity of tea imported from those countries during the last 3 years are as follows:

(in Mn. Kgs.)

Countries	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Indonesia	0.58	0.71	4.36
Turkey	—	0.01	2.51
Bangladesh	0.02	0.26	0.54
Kenya	0.50	0.11	0.44
Sri Lanka	0.02	0.25	0.39
Others	0.13	1.27	0.69
TOTAL:	1.25	2.61	8.93 "

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Several Steps have been taken by the Government/Tea Board for increasing production of tea. The steps include financial assistance by Tea Board to the tea industry through its various developmental schemes for encouraging extension planting, re-planting, rejuvenation pruning, infilling, creation of irrigation facilities and drainage etc.

(e) and (f) The following year-wise targets have been fixed for production of Tea in India during the 9th Five Year Plan Period:—

(in Mn. Kgs.)

Year	Production Target
1597-98	825
1998-99	860
1999-2000	905
2000-2001	950
2001-2002	1000

Agricultural Export

5198. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agricultural exports amount to only 20 percent of the total exports;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this is a low percentage when 75 percent of the population is involved in this rural sector;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for the poor performance; and

(d) the steps Government plan to take?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Agricultural exports account for 18-20% of the total exports from the country.

(c) Exports of agricultural products are dependent on a number of factors such as domestic production and consumption, exportable surpluses, consumer preference, varieties being traded, quality, domestic and international prices, availability of infrastructure to store, process, transport and despatch.